

SECRET/EXDIS

SALT TWO
SESSION I
A- 112

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
U.S. SALT DELEGATION
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

DATE: 18 December 1972

TIME: 7:15 - 8:30 p.m.

PLACE: Amb. Rimestad's
Residence

SUBJECT: SALT TWO-I

PARTICIPANTS: US

USSR

H. Stoertz

P. A. Skoptsov

FBS

Skoptsov said he thought the statement Amb. Smith had made today sounded "militant." I said it had been specific, giving facts and reasons. Skoptsov rehearsed familiar Soviet positions, and said we must understand that each of the 7,000 nuclear weapons in Europe could do just as much damage to a Soviet city as could any of the warheads on what the US called central systems. Thus our definition of so-called central systems was inadequate in terms of the "whole package" of the nuclear threat to the USSR from US systems. The entire package must be dealt with in this round of the negotiations. After a digression to other subjects as described below, Skoptsov characterized the Soviet motive in seeking US withdrawal of nuclear forces as a political motive. When I asked why he had changed reasons, he replied that the US motive in retaining forces and bases in Europe was political, because the USSR was not threatening to attack our European Allies. I said I presumed that the alliances of the two sides were strong enough to serve their purposes of maintaining regional military balance, and that the forces which one side maintained to assist in defense of its allies could not be discussed without raising also the issue of medium range forces on the other side which served the same purpose.

Overseas Basing of SLBMs

I identified the Soviet proposal for withdrawal of SLBM subs beyond range as an example of several unrealistic proposals the Soviet side had tabled at this session. I said our statement of today illustrated that our positions were based on the facts, both with respect to the present strategic balance

SECRET/EXDIS

State Department review

SECRET/EXDIS

-2-

and what one could reasonably expect as technology advanced. The 7,500 km tests of Soviet SLBMs indicated the futility of attempting to establish lines beyond which such systems would be withdrawn. How would this increase the security of the USSR when they knew that subs could quickly return within range and that the US could in due course also develop SLBMs which could reach the USSR from home ports? Skoptsov briefly tried claiming that we had only read about such a range in the newspapers. I said that what Skoptsov had read in the paper was an announcement by the Secretary of Defense, who did not make announcements without valid information. Skoptsov then said the flight times of US SLBMs based in England were shorter than the flight times of missiles of longer range, like ICBMs based in the US. I said the differences were like 15 minutes versus 25 or 30 minutes, and asked if the USSR was seriously proposing a permanent agreement which attempted to achieve equality in flight times of missiles. It was at this point that Skoptsov characterized the Soviet proposal for withdrawal of US overseas forces and liquidation of overseas bases as political.

Aggregates

While he was emphasizing the importance of FBS to the Soviet side, Skoptsov said the USSR had not argued against equal aggregates. The question was, what should be included in the aggregates? If the US would acknowledge the strategic significance of each element in the "whole package," then we could discuss equal aggregates. He said it would be possible to consider an overall aggregate which would be equal and would include, on both sides, all the systems capable of delivering nuclear warheads to the territory of the other side.

Bombers

Skoptsov asked me to repeat for him the US proposal with respect to bombers. I said that, as before, we proposed to include heavy bombers in an equal aggregate of central strategic systems. He asked, one-for-one, with missile launchers, even though each bomber could carry many bombs or ASMs? I said each delivery vehicle would count as one--a bomber which could carry one or many bombs and a missile which could carry one or many warheads. I then said the Soviet proposals on bombers included another example of what we regarded as unrealistic proposals. While we might not agree with them all, we could understand the Soviet proposals for limits on numbers of bombers, on new types of bombers, and on long range ASMs. But we could not even understand the Soviet proposal to remove the bombs from bombers. How could such a ban be verified? Skoptsov said this proposal was made on instructions. He himself did not know the reasoning behind it. There were certain proposals that the military insisted on. I said I could not believe that the Soviet delegation made proposals that came from the military and not the Politburo.

SECRET/EXDIS

SECRET/EXDIS

-3-

He then said the proposal came on instructions from "the government," and repeated that he did not understand it himself. When I asked how we could explain this proposal to our government, Skoptsov said he could only suggest that we say the USSR side would provide more details at the next session. I urged him to ask how a "ban-the-bomb" proposal would be verified when he returned to Moscow.

Compensation

In discussing SLBMs, Skoptsov alleged that the US had compensated the USSR for overseas basing and Allied SLBMs in the Interim Agreement. I pointed out that at Helsinki Amb. Smith had explicitly rejected Minister Semenov's argumentation, and that he had repeated this rejection on 26 May, the day the Interim Agreement had been signed. Skoptsov said that nevertheless the Interim Agreement allowed the US 41 subs and the USSR 62, and that this had been arranged in Moscow while Amb. Smith had been in Helsinki. I said this illustrated why the Interim Agreement was interim--it had only applied a temporary brake on ongoing programs pending negotiation of an agreement which would be equitable to both sides over the long term. In any event, Amb. Smith had been acting on instructions when he made his statements in May, and he had repeated US rejection of the Soviet considerations again today. Skoptsov then repeated his argument that the "whole package" must now be included in an agreement.

173
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